

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**RS22969**

This legislation eliminates the June 30, 2014 sunset on "use it or lose it" flexibility in instructional staff funding for public schools. During the Great Recession, as school budgets were reduced, the Legislature provided some flexibility on the previous requirement that school districts must hire 100% of the instructional staff positions funded by the state, or lose funding for those positions that were not hired. This provided school districts with added flexibility in managing reduced budgets. Previously, the only option would have been to reduce pay, which was generally done through furlough days, shortening the school year and reducing instruction time. With flexibility, districts could also implement a reduction in force, or simply leave some vacant positions unfilled, as part of their budget-balancing strategy. Now that public school budgets are growing again, and school districts have more money available to hire instructional staff, this legislation begins a targeted approach of reducing the flexibility by 1% for each year in which a school district's average class size is at least one student above the statewide average class size, beginning in FY16. So for school districts with large class sizes, general flexibility would reduce from 9.5% in FY15 to 8.5% in FY16, and by further 1% increments in the future for each year in which class sizes were at least one student above the state average. This approach allows for continued flexibility for those (primarily rural) districts in which class size is not a problem, while beginning to address it in those districts where it is a cause for concern.

FISCAL NOTE

No fiscal impact expected, since school districts have historically hired to whichever instructional staffing level is required by the state.

Contact:

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